

**PUBLIC SERVICE WORK GROUP**  
***REPORT TO THE DIVISION MANAGEMENT TEAM***

**June 8, 2001**

*Compiled by Bruce Bartley, co-chair*

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*With an eye toward achieving the highest level of customer satisfaction, the Public Service Work Group (PSWG) identified eight objectives and 13 strategic issues that need to be resolved to achieve the overall goal.*

*While the recommendations contain some new programs and services, the underlying theme was that we need to do a better job of disseminating the information we already have and expand the services we already provide. With respect to existing information and services, the PSWG believes the primary obstacle to achieving the highest level of customer satisfaction has been inadequate staff.*

*For the new programs and services suggested, a number of new positions are recommended. Many of them require people with skills other than the traditional biological expertise we seek for most Division of Wildlife Conservation positions. Public speaking, teaching, conflict resolution and information management technology are among the skills these new positions will demand.*

*It was recognized early on by all participants that there is significant overlap between public service and education. Cognizant that another group was working on education, the PSWG delineated the distinction in its collective mind by defining education as the message content and public service as the delivery of the message.*

*In those instances where the PSWG felt the message had yet to be defined, it deferred to the Education Work Group. While not presuming to speak for the education group, the PSWG felt the public service specialist positions it identified would/could complement education efforts. The PSWG understood these positions might be altered to public service/education specialists and felt such a designation would be appropriate.*

*The PSWG felt it had neither the time nor expertise to develop definitive cost estimates for its recommendations. For the new positions it suggested, it delineated possible job classes to get at the cost. For those programs with which PSWG had some familiarity, rough cost estimates were included.*

*In delineating possible job classes, the PSWG also suggested some organizational structure. But after lengthy discussion of statewide programs versus regional, the group decided it best to leave the structure to another work group.*

*Delivery of excellent public service goes beyond staffing. Inadequate office space, parking and impenetrable automated phone systems all hinder delivery of public service. Knowing other work groups will be addressing those issues, the PSWG work group forwarded such concerns to those groups as part of their deliberations.*

*Whatever one's position or job description, all DWC employees at one time or another are involved in public service directly or indirectly. The PSWG felt there needs to be a*

*greater commitment by all employees toward providing excellent public service and a greater awareness of for whom we actually work.*

## II. INTRODUCTION

The PSWG was fully aware that its views on what needs to be done to provide better public service may be different from what the public thinks. Comprehensive survey work needs to be done with the public to determine the needs and desires of the public and whether and how those fit into DWC's mission.

Nevertheless, the PSWG recognized the value of providing "straw men" for the public to focus the discussion. Rather than starting with a blank sheet of paper, survey respondents will have some ideas to consider, accept, modify or reject. The PSWG clearly understands and accepts that some of its recommendations could be altered substantially once the public provides its perspective.

As such, this report should be viewed as a starting point rather than a finished product. Flexibility will be the key in coping with what must be a dynamic process.

The PSWG consisted of the following members:

Steve Machida, management coordinator, Region II, co-chair  
Bruce Bartley, information officer, Region II, co-chair  
Lela Chatham, program technician, Region I  
Kalin Kellie, wildlife technician, Region III  
Jackie Kephart, wildlife biologist, Headquarters  
Enid Keyes, wildlife information center supervisor, Region II  
Tony Monzingo, HIT coordinator, statewide  
Kate Persons, area biologist, Region V  
Jeff Selinger, assistant area biologist, Region III  
Bob Sutherland, biometrician, Region II

Jeff Hughes, regional supervisor, Region II  
Steve Schwartz, permit hunt administrator, Information Management

Hughes and Schwartz served as liaison for the DMT. While both participated in the discussions, they were not involved in selecting or prioritizing topics and issues.

The process was facilitated by Assistant Director Doug Larsen. He was assisted by project assistant Teri Arnold (recorder) and wildlife planner (process) Margo Matthews of his staff.

### III. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The Division of Wildlife Conservation, through all staff, shall seek to achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction across all regions by:

- a. demonstrating consistently professional and courteous behavior toward the public
- b. providing a core of required and elective services, and
- c. providing consistent and accurate information.

The PSWG defined **public service** as: providing the public with the wildlife-related information and services they want and need, consistent with the mission of the DWC. Public services include, but are not limited to, presentations, responding one-on-one to questions, contributing to department publications, participating in department-sponsored events, routine “front counter” services, required documentation services (sealing, harvest tickets, etc.), and listening to the public.

To accomplish this goal, the PSWG developed the following objectives:

1. Ensure reasonable availability of all licenses, tags, permits, harvest tickets and sealing services throughout the state to facilitate regulatory compliance by hunters.
2. Utilize a statewide policy and local protocols to deal with nuisance wildlife.
3. Encourage participation in, and understanding of, the regulatory process and the basis for regulatory decisions.
4. Develop and implement a multi-level service model (i.e., rural, urban, statewide) that provides consistency and quality at each level with a feedback mechanism for measuring success.
5. Provide public service in a manner that achieves the highest level of customer satisfaction.
6. Identify what information and services would help all users better enjoy and appreciate wildlife; develop and deliver programs and materials to meet those identified needs.
7. Provide timely, accurate, comprehensible (i.e., written in lay terms), concise, complete and easily accessible information regarding all aspects of DWC’s activities and functions to all members of the public.
8. All staff understands the importance of public service and recognize their responsibility in achieving our public service goal.

The objectives are listed by number simply for ease of tracking. All objectives were seen as equally important and there was no attempt or intent to prioritize them.

## IV. OVERVIEW

**OBJECTIVE 1.** Ensure reasonable availability of all licenses, tags, permits, harvest tickets and sealing services throughout the state to facilitate regulatory compliance by hunters.

*Strategic issue:* In some parts of the state, there is no practical way for people to comply with regulatory requirements with regard to licenses, tags, harvest tickets, some permits and sealing of furbearers and bears because of a lack of vendors and sealers.

**OBJECTIVE 2.** Utilize a statewide policy and local protocols to deal with nuisance wildlife.

*Strategic issue:* There are more animal distress and nuisance calls than we can respond to. The public is concerned with the welfare of individual animals, doesn't understand the expense involved in relocating and/or rehabilitating wildlife, and has difficulty distinguishing between nuisances and threats.

**OBJECTIVE 3.** Encourage participation in, and understanding of, the regulatory process and the basis for regulatory decisions.

*Strategic issue:* Lack of financial support for, and awareness of, the Advisory Committee system has made the system ineffective, and in some cases allowed committees to be captured by special interests.

**OBJECTIVE 4.** Develop and implement a multi-level service model (i.e., rural, urban, statewide) that provides consistency and quality at each level with a feedback mechanism for measuring success.

*Strategic issue:* Public service increasingly competes with traditional activities, detracting from our goal of maintaining wildlife management expertise and our vision of providing excellence in public service. The problem is only likely to get worse as there will be greater expectations of public service with the advent of CARA funding.

*Strategic issue:* Due to differing core values, we have not effectively established working relationships in Native communities, leading to inconsistent views and conflict over how resources should be managed.

**OBJECTIVE 5.** Provide public service in a manner that achieves the highest level of customer satisfaction.

*Strategic issue:* Even when we have information and service programs in place, they aren't always readily available to a public that works normal business hours. Inadequacies in facilities, parking, hours, phones and staffing are detracting from our ability to provide core services.

*Strategic issue:* A lack of shooting ranges means unacceptable wounding losses and a negative public image of hunters.

**OBJECTIVE 6.** Identify what information and services would help all users better enjoy and appreciate wildlife; develop and deliver programs and materials to meet those identified needs.

*Strategic issue:* The difficulty the public has in identifying land ownership creates management and trespass problems, frustrating our ability to meet wildlife population objectives and generating a poor image of users.

**OBJECTIVE 7.** Provide timely, accurate, comprehensible (i.e., written in lay terms), concise, complete and easily accessible information regarding all aspects of DWC's activities and functions to all members of the public.

*Strategic issue:* DWC does an inadequate job of conveying important messages to a broad cross-section of the general public.

*Strategic issue:* The information and services provided by DWC need to be available to the public/customer in as many formats as possible. Traditionally, information has been provided in written form and services by personal contact. Increased use of the Internet has widened the options for public/customer access but more needs to be done.

*Strategic issue:* There is an insatiable audience for information on wildlife populations, status, density, etc. from the public/customer as well as local, state and federal agencies, and we don't do a very good job of providing it.

*Strategic Issue:* There is ever-increasing demand, both internally and externally, for information available through a web site. DWC does not have a web master.

**OBJECTIVE 8.** All staff understands the importance of public service and recognize their responsibility in achieving our public service goal.

*Strategic issue:* Not all staff demonstrates a commitment to public service. This results in loss of public confidence and financial support, reduced customer satisfaction, and potential misplaced focus of research and management efforts.



## V. DISCUSSION

The PSWG was reluctant to rank the identified issues and possible issues from first to last in priority. The feeling was that all were important, and they represent the “cream of the crop” having survived a winnowing process that began with more than 100 existing or proposed programs or services. The group recognized, however, that it is unreasonable to expect that all of the recommendations be implemented immediately or simultaneously. For implementation purposes only, the group assigned the issues to three levels of importance, with Level 1 being the highest priority.

In the discussion regarding these priority levels, PSWG members listed the following considerations as important criteria:

- administrative feasibility
- getting the information we have out to the public
- concern with lack of staff to deal with the public
- cost effectiveness – “biggest bang” for the buck and increasing service to the most people
- regional considerations
- greatest positive rural impact
- understanding the regulatory process
- making it easier to comply with regulations
- imminent retirement of the *ad hoc* DWC webmaster
- some regional concerns are also statewide issues
- address perceived public frustrations
- address core services that we have to provide
- demonstrate a change in our attitude in serving the public
- take advantage of technological advances to help serve the public
- promote wildlife conservation

The levels were determined by “Chicago-style” balloting, with each member getting five votes, no more than two of which could be for a single item. Level 1 items received six or more votes, Level 2 items 2-5 votes and Level 3 items zero or one vote. The DMT liaisons did not participate in the voting.

Issues were not prioritized within the various levels.

### A. LEVEL ONE

**Nuisance/Distressed Animals:** There are more animal distress and nuisance calls than we can respond to. The public is concerned with the welfare of individual animals, doesn’t understand the expense involved in relocating and/or rehabilitating wildlife, and has difficulty distinguishing between nuisances and threats. Responding to these calls eats up the time staff has to do its assigned work.

***Possible Solution:*** The PSWG recommends more staff be added specifically to deal with nuisance/distressed animal calls. Long-term, that means adding more permanent positions as nuisance wildlife specialists. Short-term, it can be dealt with by adding seasonal technician time. The idea of contracting out such work was discussed. While that may be possible, it appears there are numerous legal and liability obstacles that could preclude such action any time soon.

As envisioned by the group, these personnel would be similar to wildlife extension agents, a concept already being utilized in some Lower 48 state like Montana. Certainly they wouldn’t be responding to nuisance calls all day every day all year long. When not responding to such calls, they would be traveling

around their respective regions, distributing materials designed to prevent/avoid future nuisance/distress calls.

**Obstacles:** Cost for additional personnel.

**Cost:** By way of developing a cost estimate, the group identified the following personnel needs:

- Region I: one permanent full-time position (WBI) in Juneau, six months of Tech III time in Ketchikan
  - Region II: one permanent full-time position (WB I) in Anchorage; 18 months of Tech III time (three techs, six months each)
  - Region III: one permanent full-time position (WBI) in Fairbanks; 6 months of roving tech time
  - Region V: one statewide person to turn to for advice, to develop educational materials and messages.
- Statewide: one permanent full-time position (WB II) to oversee program, evaluate regional efforts, and provide the kind of resources identified by Region V to all the regions.

**Staffing:** See above.

**Evaluation:** The program could be evaluated by a decrease in the number of nuisance/distress calls, fewer DLPs and the ability of area biologists to get their other work done.

**Public Service Specialists:** Public service demands increasingly compete with traditional activities, detracting from our goal of maintaining wildlife management expertise and compromising our vision of providing excellence in public service. The problem is likely to get worse as there will be greater expectations of public service with the advent of CARA funding.

Possible solution: A public service specialist should be added to each area office. More than one should be added in those offices that deal with the bulk of the population. In other words, the size of the public service staff should be commensurate with the number of people served.

A new job class should be created, one which emphasizes a background in education and public speaking rather than strictly biology. In some area offices, the position would entail a considerable amount of travel to outlying areas to provide necessary public services.

A regional coordinator would supervise the efforts of these specialists, provide message content and direction. And a statewide coordinator would act as a clearinghouse for what various regions and area offices are doing and its applicability elsewhere.

While the group was reluctant to be so presumptuous as to speak on behalf of the Education Work Group, the PSWG felt these new positions could and probably should have an education component to them.

One alternative obviously is to reduce the public services we provide, and focus on doing a good job on our remaining tasks. The group rejected the idea.

**Obstacles:** The biggest and most obvious is cost. Additionally, in order to develop a consistent model of providing public services on a rural, urban and statewide basis, we must change our corporate culture which has evolved into a great deal of regional and area autonomy. In recognition of that culture, group members went to great length to emphasize that the job of the statewide coordinator would NOT be to impose programs on regions or area offices.

There was considerable discussion about the wisdom of trying to develop a public service delivery model when it is not yet clear from the public about what services they want/need/deem important. Whatever public input is solicited later in the strategic planning process must address these wants/needs.

**Cost:** Not determined.

**Staffing:** The PSWG identified the following personnel needs:

- One position full time – statewide coordinator
- Four positions, full time – one coordinator for each region
- Twenty-three+ positions – new public service specialist job class (one per area office plus more as needed, depending on numbers of public served)

**Evaluation:** None identified.

**Vendors Everywhere:** In some parts of the state, there is no practical way for people to comply with regulatory requirements with regard to licenses, tags, harvest tickets, some permits and sealing of furbearers and bears because of a lack of vendors and sealers. Low profitability and the way Licensing has dealt with vendors make the service unappealing in many areas.

**Possible solution:** Among the solutions suggested was paying license vendors/fur sealers a monthly fee (\$50) whether or not they sell any licenses or seal any furs. Currently vendors are paid only by the licenses and tags they sell and the harvest tickets they issue. Those commissions would remain in place, in addition to the \$50 monthly stipend. Increased fur sealers is seen as a way to provide better harvest data.

To facilitate a statewide vendor/sealer program, the PSWG decided there needs to be a new clerical level position in each region devoted primarily to coordination. Because personal or telephone contact is more effective than written instructions in many rural areas, travel would be required to set up and instruct new vendors and regular telephone contact would be maintained to ensure collection reports, overlays, unused seals and sealing reports are delivered in a timely manner. The group also felt a statewide coordinator was necessary to supervise the regional clerks and provide liaison with Information Management and Licensing.

Such a program should be coordinated with Sport Fish and Commercial Fish for which licensing also is an issue.

**Obstacles:** Cost. DWC must retain the authority to decide how many vendors/sealers are necessary in each community. Potential vendors/sealers (or their employees) would have to agree to undergo DWC training. Only people willing to be both a vendor and sealer would be eligible for the stipend. Materials must be multi-lingual and ADA compliant as necessary.

A possible alternative would be to contract such services with native corporations but it was rejected as even more expensive and probably unrealistic.

**Cost:** Not determined.

**Staffing:** Four clerical positions (range not identified) – one for each region.  
One statewide coordinator (range not identified).

**Evaluation:** None identified.

**Division Webmaster:** There is ever-increasing demand, both internally and externally, for information available through a web site. (Although it wasn't addressed specifically, a recent study shows two of every three Alaska households have a computer, the highest percentage in the United States). The potential

audience is large and international in scope and includes wider, less traditional constituencies. DWC does not have a webmaster. Phil Koehl has been doing an excellent job of managing the division's web site, but he has other responsibilities, and he is retiring soon. This need is tied in with the interactive kiosks and general information distribution discussed in other recommendations. A fully functioning web site would help address seven of the PSWG's eight objectives.

**Obstacles:** Cost.

**Cost:** The PSWG concluded the only way to accomplish this recommendation is to create a permanent full-time webmaster position (Range 18 AP III). The group also saw the need for a GIS specialist to assist the webmaster. The two skills are separate and distinct. Becky Straugh has been doing a wonderful job with GIS, but again she has other responsibilities. The need for regional webmasters (sites) was discussed. The concern was that adding those positions immediately, before the DWC site was functioning as envisioned, might overload the statewide position.

**Staffing:** The group recommended a two-phase approach:

- 1) immediately hiring a web master (Range 18 AP III) and a GIS expert (Range 18 AP III)
- 2) add regional web masters as needed.

**Evaluation:** Recording and analyzing web site hits. The technology exists to track those hits very specifically by location as well as just raw numbers.

## **B. LEVEL TWO**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE:** Not all of the staff consistently demonstrates a commitment to public service. This results in loss of public confidence and financial support, reduced customer satisfaction, and potential misplaced focus of research and management efforts.

**Possible solutions:** The PSWG was unable to come up with a single "silver bullet" because solving the problem entails changing people's attitudes.

Among the suggestions:

- Incorporate public service into job descriptions and allocate staff time to do it.
- Improve the way we orient new employees. Train for the attitude of public service desired.
- Work with the University of Alaska to dispel "elitist" attitude of those with higher education in wildlife and environmental studies. Foster a public servant attitude and the reality of for whom the research and data collection is being done. The college intern program could be a starting point for this effort. Enhance partnerships with universities by giving presentations on the realities of wildlife biologist jobs.
- Employees skilled in non-technical writing and speaking should handle writing for and speaking to the public. Consider contracting those services when needed. Regardless, other staff still must provide the material. Even with staff specializing in public speaking and writing, training in these areas still is important for all staff for things like BOG presentations.
- Promote the stewardship model of wildlife management where appropriate; give the public a voice and role in management instead of presenting them with DWC's idea of "the way things should be."

**Obstacles:** Cost. The difficulty of changing attitudes rather than behavior. Supervisory support for change, for emphasis and follow-through. Time commitment in dealing with universities.

**Cost:** Training. Staff time. Public survey costs.

**Staffing:** None identified.

**Evaluation:** Follow-up public surveys and focus groups. Increase in funding at all levels because the public feels their needs for information and services are being met in a professional and courteous manner.

**EXPANDED HOURS:** Even when we have information and service programs in place, they aren't always readily available to a public that works normal business hours. Inadequacies in facilities, parking, hours, phones and staffing are detracting from our ability to provide core services.

**Possible solutions:** The PSWG recommends the information centers in Anchorage, Palmer, Soldotna, Douglas and Fairbanks remain open until 6 p.m. on weekdays and that they be open on Saturdays. The recommendation is contingent on acceptance of an earlier recommendation that at least one new public service specialist be assigned to every area office in the state.

The number of services available of Saturdays may have to be curtailed because of staffing issues and it may be necessary to have those offices open on Saturdays only during the primary hunting seasons (fall). Exactly how hours should be extended and what services should be provided should be one of the primary questions addressed by whatever public input work is done to support the strategic planning process.

**Obstacles:** Big Admin undoubtedly will have lots to say about what buildings can be opened when, and about staffing issues.

**Cost:** If public service specialists are added to area offices proportional to the number of customers served, and supervisors are creative with work schedules, there won't be much additional cost beyond adding those public service positions identified earlier.

**Staffing:** See Public Service Specialists.

**Evaluation:** None identified.

**TELL 'EM WHAT WE KNOW:** There is an insatiable audience for information on wildlife populations, status, density, etc. from the public/customer as well as local, state and federal agencies, and we don't do a very good job of providing it. We lack a centralized database of survey and research data, and we lack information in a form that is comprehensible to a general audience. Such information is the topic of questions often asked by the public.

In addition, the public is unaware of many wildlife programs. Specific problems identified include timeliness of harvest data, that area offices don't get sealing information to IM in a timely manner, accuracy, the need to incorporate new data as it is received, and an inability to conveniently or accurately find statewide harvest and population figures. Improving in this area will enhance the public's understanding of who we are and what we do as Alaska's primary source of wildlife information. It was pointed out that federal agencies are very good at this information dissemination. They have lots of money and people to promote their role, even though they actually gather very little data. ADF&G gathers lots of information but doesn't do very well at getting it out.

**Possible solutions:** The PSWG feels one of the most effective methods of communicating the information would be through the public service specialists identified above. We need a program to coordinate getting data from IM and disseminating it. The program would be one of the primary responsibilities of the statewide public service coordinator identified above.

Beyond that, delivery of such information needs to be through a variety of mechanisms. Among those identified were the interactive kiosks discussed below, the web site, brochures, handouts (including the many that already exist), and possibly a magazine. It is important to budget money to reprint handouts and brochures. In the past, many well-done, informative publications have been produced, but once the initial

printing was exhausted there was no funding for more. We must modernize (automate) information management data systems to provide more timely and accurate data to ABs, staff and the public.

Finally, each area biologist should produce an annual “state of the unit” report, similar to what Region II does with its briefing book prior to upcoming Board of Game meetings, to be posted to a variety of media.

**Obstacles:** Cost. The willingness of ABs to provide data and analysis, due to a fear that it could be misinterpreted by a lack of narrative and analysis.

**Cost:** While some of the costs are intermingled with the delivery mechanisms, the group identified two specific personnel needs: a permanent full-time position to manage publications statewide and a permanent full-time position to oversee consolidating and updating the information, and disseminating it to the regions, the web site, the kiosks, the publications person, etc.

**Staffing:** One full time position – statewide publications specialist (develop, update, coordinate publications/videos); one full-time position – statewide information guru (kiosks, web sites, handouts, brochures, etc.).

**Evaluation:** Suggestions included the number of publications requested, the number of web site/kiosk hits and a public survey to determine the effectiveness of various delivery methods.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEES:** Lack of financial support and awareness of the AC system has made the system ineffective, and in some cases allowed committees to be captured by special interests. The ineffectiveness of the AC system is illustrated by the BOG’s selective use of AC input and its tendency to by-pass the AC system on controversial issues. In both rural and urban areas, many people don’t even know the AC system exists.

Because of inadequate funding, many far-flung committees are unable to hold the two meetings a year required to be considered an active AC. Even where two meetings are held, one typically is devoted entirely to fish proposals. As a result, many ACs lack the time to develop their own wildlife proposals.

Possible solutions: This is another multi-faceted problem which does not lend itself to a single solution. While recognizing that DWC’s options for retooling AC membership are limited by statute, the PSWG made the following recommendations:

- ADF&G needs to do a better job of financially supporting rural ACs.
- AC meeting dates and summaries of what occurred at those meetings should be posted in every area office.
- Handouts should be developed explaining the BOG and AC process.
- ADF&G should provide logistical and financial support for annual meetings of AC representatives from throughout each region to discuss their concerns and needs.
- To the extent possible, AC members should be appointed to public work groups/committees charted by ADF&G and the BOG.

**Obstacles:** Statutory direction regarding the structure of ACs.

**Cost:** Not identified.

**Evaluation:** Not identified.

**Communications in Rural Alaska:** Due to differing core values, we have not effectively established working relationships in Native communities, which leads to inconsistent views and conflict over how our resources should be managed.

Possible solutions: Again, this is a multi-faceted issue which does not lend itself to simple solutions. The PSWG recommended DWC seek and foster partnerships with Native corporations and shareholders, by things such as:

- Going out to communities and soliciting invitations to come in and talk, trying to get suggestions from them on partnerships in order to achieve common goals.
- Creating staff positions like the federal Refuge Information Technicians.
- Whenever possible, filling the newly created public service specialist positions with people from the region they are working in (ideally a local person), and in some cases bilingual
- Using local residents as observers on wildlife surveys.
- Trying to incorporate traditional knowledge into our messages.
- Looking for mechanisms to give more staff experience in rural Alaska, or cross-cultural education for those more “office-bound.”
- Inviting Native representatives to participate in regional and division staff meetings.
- Actively seeking diplomatic solutions; consider how far we are willing to compromise, and identify where the middle ground is, but be aware of Canadian extreme.

**Obstacles:** Staff time. Difficulty in finding local people interested and qualified to work for us. Overcoming staff biases. Staff reticence to change. Native willingness to talk with outsiders. Developing relationships takes a long time. Staff turnover. Difference in communication styles between cultures. Value difference in hunting: right vs. privilege.

**Cost:** Staff, time, training, travel, logistics, perceived loss of control.

**Evaluation:** Increased number of cooperative projects, more communication initiated by Native community, better regulatory compliance and reporting, increased number of Native-sponsored proposals to the BOG and increased number of Native staff in ADF&G.

**LAND STATUS INFORMATION:** The difficulty the public has in identifying land ownership creates management and trespass problems, frustrating our ability to meet wildlife population objectives and generating a poor image of users.

**Possible solutions:** Technology exists within the Department of Natural Resources to identify ownership of any land in the state. We should integrate DNR’s map materials with ours and have the ability to access them from any office in the state. Hard copies should be available where there is no access to a DWC office or to personal computer with Internet access. Identify hotspots where trespass is a big issue and reference those to Tina Cuning’s group for resolution (map development, access points). The issues and technology involved were such that the PSWG recommended the DMT appoint a task force to look at this and related issues such as the availability of accurate GMU maps and enforceability of our regulations.

**Obstacles:** Working with DNR to make information available and making sure it is updated in a reasonably timely manner. Staff time, cost, storage and distribution of hard copies. Level of detail on maps. Liability.

**Costs:** Additional staff and time for inventory and distribution of maps, production materials and increased GIS capability.

**Staffing:** one full-time position AP III – statewide GIS specialist.

**Evaluation:** Less trespassing and fewer complaints from the public.

## C. LEVEL THREE

**Shooting Ranges:** A lack of shooting ranges means unacceptable wounding losses and a negative public image of hunters. Based on results from public activities at Rabbit Creek Rifle Range, it appears probable that wounding loss could be twice as high as the 17% most commonly factored into most management calculations. This has serious management implications. Lack of formal ranges means hunters have limited options for developing or maintaining shooting proficiency, and it results in informal sites being trashed, giving hunters a bad image even though much of the problem probably isn't attributable to hunters.

**Possible solutions:** More outdoor ranges (because indoor ranges don't accommodate the weapons typically used by hunters), proficiency testing, electronic "virtual" shooting systems and clinics put on by DWC.

**Obstacles:** Lack of formal ranges is not perceived as a big problem in rural Alaska where makeshift practice sites are the rule rather than the exception. Also, the high price of ammunition makes it unrealistic to expect rural residents to spend money shooting at things they can't eat. Other obstacles include cost, staffing and maintenance, potential utilization, liability, land acquisition, public acceptance and local land use regulations.

Without facilities, the concept of shooting proficiency is meaningless. It was pointed out that proficiency is not a one-time accomplishment but a skill that must be maintained through ongoing practice. Perhaps the most significant obstacle to any kind of mandatory proficiency requirement would be political opposition from adult hunters. Some suggestions for overcoming that opposition are incentives to encourage people to become and stay proficient, such as a "master hunter" program similar to Oregon and Minnesota and extra chances in popular Alaska drawing permit hunts.

**Cost:** Estimates for outdoor ranges were beyond the capabilities of the group. It was noted that outdoor ranges are significantly less expensive to build and operate than indoor ranges. Heavily used outdoor ranges like Rabbit Creek are self-sufficient. "Virtual" shooting systems like the DART systems we already have are becoming much cheaper and more portable with the new LaserShot system running about \$12,600 a copy. They are cheap on a per shooter basis, demonstrate the need for education and proficiency, provide moving targets, are compatible with schools, and provide great public relations vehicles for spreading related messages. Drawbacks are the lack of realistic sound and recoil, both of which affect shooting proficiency.

**Staffing:** Range staff as necessary.

**Evaluation:** None identified.

**Interactive kiosks:** The information and services provided by DWC need to be available to the public/customer in as many formats as possible. Traditionally, information has been provided in written form and services by personal contact. Increased use of the Internet has widened the options for public/customer access but more needs to be done.

**Possible solution:** The technology known as "touch screen" could greatly enhance access to information and services at places and times where they now are unavailable. The technology is visual, menu-driven so the consumer selects the desired information, multi-layered so the consumer gets the degree of detail desired and can be designed to serve non-consumptive as well as consumptive users.

The PSWG envisions interactive kiosks designed similar to automated teller machines (ATMs) so they could be available for use 24/7. Among the possible sites would be every DWC office statewide, major airports and visitor centers. Information available would include wildlife species, populations, distribution, viewing opportunities and harvest data. Ideally, the kiosks concept could be expanded later to sell licenses



and tags and issue harvest tickets. The kiosk technology exists and is relatively inexpensive. Much of the information to be provided already is in hand, but not in a centralized location.

**Obstacles:** Cost to obtain the necessary hardware and software, design the system and create a position responsible for compiling the information to be provided. It will take several years to fully develop and implement. The PSWG identified five phases to the project: requirements analysis, design, software/hardware/initial deployment and expanded deployment. Analysis and design would be done by contract with experts outside the agency. Ongoing maintenance would be handled by the division's webmaster. The initial deployment would be in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau. More sites would be added as performance dictates. The group also suggested we approach Sport Fish about whether it would be willing to go in as partner with us.

**Cost:** Beyond the capacity of the PSWG to determine. It was suggested that if the recommendation is accepted, the DMT specify an amount of money for one or more phases of the project to be accomplished in the first year of CARA funding.

**Evaluation:** Number of times kiosks used.

**More media:** DWC does an inadequate job of conveying important messages to a broad cross-section of the general public.

**Possible solution:** Use more public service announcements and paid advertisements to convey important messages based on three broad themes: living with wildlife (in both urban and rural settings), safety with respect to wildlife, their use and appreciation, and who we (DWC) are and what we do. Specifically, some topics identified were bears and garbage, nuisance moose, traveling in bear country, etiquette around wildlife, and outdoor survival while enjoying/using wildlife.

**Obstacles:** Cost to increase use of paid advertisements. While PSAs are free, they are shorter and tend to be broadcast at less-than-desirable times. Paid advertisements can be tailored to a desired audience.

**Cost:** Information presented to the PSWG suggests \$8,000-\$10,000 to film a one-minute professional grade television commercial. Running the commercial costs \$3,000-\$5,000 a month, depending on time slots and the particular television station. Both production and broadcasts costs are considerably lower for radio advertisements. Newspaper advertisements vary widely by the size of the ad and the newspaper in which it is published. The group agreed it would be best to have an ad agency handle placement of the commercials for any sort of organized advertising campaign. It said commercials should be multi-lingual and specific to urban and rural audiences. Radio and newspapers should be added into the mix so the most appropriate media is used for each audience. All of these things add to the cost. For a one-year, multi-media campaign focusing on 6-8 distinct messages, the group estimated the cost at \$250,000.

**Evaluation:** Pre- and post-campaign surveys, changes in DLP statistics, and changes in the number of nuisance wildlife calls.

## VI. CONSIDERATIONS

In the introduction to section V. (Discussion), the factors the PSWG considered in making its recommendations are outlined. Although the group expects many of those same items will factor into the DMT's deliberations, it suggests some additional considerations.

The PSWG is realistic in its understanding that not all of its recommendations will be adopted. In some cases, recommendations may be adopted in part. The PSWG respectfully requests that when recommendations are adopted only in part, the DMT place its emphasis on filling vacancies and initiating programs within the lowest levels of the organizational structure. This is where most public service is

delivered. For example, hiring public service specialists in area offices is more important in delivering public service than hiring a statewide coordinator in Juneau.

The issue of statewide programs versus regional flexibility shadowed the discussion of nearly every recommendation. There is a strong desire on the part of the PSWG to have more consistency from region to region in DWC's approach to public service. At the same time, the size of the state and the differences in demographics make it important to retain regional flexibility. The PSWG was unable to reach any consensus on the issue, but believes it is something the DMT needs to address carefully before adopting the recommendations of this or any other work group.

## VII. PUBLIC INPUT

There was a great deal of frustration on the part of many members of the PSWG that our work began before we had a clear understanding of what the public wants and needs in the way of service. Of all the work groups chartered, this is the only one with “public” in its title, and it seemed to many it would have been more productive to begin from the public’s perspective rather than trying to figure out in advance what is best for the public. Several members felt the PSWG’s recommendations would be very different had the public been surveyed first. At the very least, the various implementation levels likely would have been considerably different.

Although the sequence was not the one the PSWG would have preferred, the group saw some merit in making concrete recommendations to give the public something to respond to and to focus public attention on what services are needed.

In this context, the PSWG again emphasizes that this report should be considered a dynamic document. The group expects the recommendations and the implementation priorities will change once the public weighs in.

While the exact methods and means of obtaining essential public input is beyond the expertise of the members of the PSWG, as outlined in our charter we identified a list of external sources which should be surveyed in whatever manner the experts deem appropriate. This list should be considered a minimum, and there may well be important segments of the public we missed.

- Hunting licensees
- Trapping licensees
- Non-hunting/trapping public (voter registration lists)
- Native corporations and their shareholders
- Disabled citizens
- Senior citizens
- Environmental groups
- Hunting organizations
- Anti-hunting organizations
- Shooting groups
- Nonresidents
- Tourism industry
- Military
- Balance between urban/rural, regions and ethnicity

## VIII. REFERRALS TO OTHER WORK GROUPS

As it worked through the various issues and ideas, the PSWG identified several that were more appropriate for other work groups. To ensure they would not be lost, here are those items along with some of the PSWG's discussion:

- The Hunter Information and Training Program, as its very title implies, consists of education as well as public service. There was reluctance to try to strip out the different components and have each work group deal with their respective components. Everyone agreed HIT is an important public service but is in large part education based. Thus the PSWG decided the **Education Work Group** should review, and if necessary, revise the existing HIT program.
- A staff suggestion was that a new spike-fork/50 video be produced, addressed specifically at Southeast Alaska where the antler structure of moose is very different from anywhere else in the state. The PSWG felt that clearly was a project for the **Education Work Group** and referred it there. Similarly, there was a staff request for more trapper education. Again, this clearly is an Education Work Group issue and was referred there. In both instances, the PSWG acknowledged its willingness to implement conveyance of whatever messages the education group develops or deems appropriate.
- A complaint raised several times in several contexts was an unwillingness on the part of some research staff to participate in public service. While the issue is addressed to some degree in our recommendation regarding staff commitment to public service, the PSWG felt the issue also should be discussed by the future **Research & Management Work Group**.
- The issue of statewide control versus regional autonomy was mentioned earlier in this report as something the DMT needs to take a careful look at when implementing work group recommendations. The PSWG also felt it is a topic the **Infrastructure Work Group** should discuss. The problem is that statewide coordinators have oversight over statewide programs but exercise no control over regional and area staff who are needed to locally administer the statewide programs. It was suggested these statewide coordinators need dedicated staff in the different regions. The current administrative structure, which emphasizes regional autonomy, does provide the DWC the flexibility it needs to adapt programs to the diversity of management situations we face. But the infrastructure work group needs to carefully balance the need for flexibility at the regional level with the consistency needed at the statewide level.
- When looking at the list of new positions recommended by the PSWG from a detached perspective, it was suggested we may be looking at creating a new, separate section (no name suggested) to accomplish much of our public service work. Given the overall similarity of their purpose, it was suggested we might consider housing this section together and hiring people who specialize in information technology and customer service rather than our more traditional biological backgrounds. Finally, it was suggested the Potter Marsh Visitor Center (now under development) might be a logical headquarters for much of this information production and distribution. This is a topic the **Infrastructure Work Group** should discuss.
- In several different contexts, the PSWG determined that inadequacies in facilities, parking, hours, phones and staffing are detracting from our ability to provide core services. Problems specific to the Anchorage office were discussed at length. The phone system came in for a great deal of criticism for outdated messages and the difficulty of reaching a real person instead of a recording. Having two buildings, splitting off a significant portion of the staff, and having separate wildlife and sport fish information centers were perceived negatively. Parking problems are well known. The phone system in the Anchorage office drew enough complaints that the PSWG recommended someone be assigned with the **primary** job responsibility of keeping the system updated and working. Fairbanks was identified as the model facility for an urban office and Delta Junction for a rural office. The PSWG

recommended this issue be forwarded to the **Infrastructure Work Group** for further consideration, keeping in mind that new facilities need to be designed with public service in mind.

- A lack of adequate enforcement was discussed and whether it is a public service issue, a management issue or something else. Doug Larsen indicated the enforcement issue already is the subject of a department-wide review. The PSWG decided that the issue needs further discussion among the **other workgroups and DWC employees**.
- More predator management was an issue raised by both staff and the public. The PSWG felt the issue would be addressed more appropriately by the Management & **Research Work Group**. The PSWG also wanted the management and research group to address the perceived fear that managers and researchers won't be forthcoming enough with information on wildlife populations, status, density, etc. to provide the level of public service the PSWG deems appropriate.
- One of the PSWG issues identified early on was more information and services to the non-hunting public. But after further discussion, the group acknowledged it has no idea what information and services the non-hunting public wants or needs. It decided to refer the issue to the **Watchable Wildlife Work Group**.